

## Module 4-Assessment for Learning

**CCT Performance Profile Indicator #1:** Using and/or designing a variety of formative assessments and summative assessments and criteria that directly align with the learning objectives and value the diversity of ways in which students learn. See additional notes at the end of the document.

**Professional Growth Goal:** My goal for this module is to learn about and define what a formative assessment is for myself. I would also like to explore a few formative assessments and use them consistently in both math and reading.

**Initial Summary:** In reading, I use DRA2 scores, Dolch (sight words), and various Mondo assessments (Letter/Sound Correspondence and Letter Identification) to inform my instruction and create guided reading groups to meet the needs of all of my learners. I also reflect daily on my observations of my students' strengths and challenges with reading. These observations do help inform and guide reading lessons that follow. I am finding that I have difficulty recognizing when students are ready to move on to the next level of text. Learning more about formative assessments that can help me pinpoint areas of difficulty for these students will help me to address their needs in a timely manner. In math, I am finding that I have fewer resources for a quick assessment of my students' understanding to help inform my instruction. Currently, I utilize summative assessment data more often than formative. As in reading, I would like to learn more about formative assessments that are simple and can help me address areas of need upon administration. My focus for this module in math will be to use formative assessments to help support my students' understanding of place value concepts.

I started by reading an article by Steven and Jan Chappuis found in Educational Leadership entitled *The Best Value in Formative Assessment*. They define formative assessment as "assessment for learning," (2007/2008). Summative assessments do not contribute much to day to day instruction whereas formative assessments help inform student understanding immediately. How the results are used determines whether the assessment is formative or summative. *From reading this article and thinking about my own prior knowledge of formative assessment, I developed my own working definition of what formative assessment is. I think quick, assessments that a teacher utilizes to assess student understanding in the middle of a unit of learning. Not formal, is quick and allows teacher to see student struggles/misconceptions.* As I began to narrow down what type of formative assessments I wanted to use in reading, I thought about what information I needed to know about my students and how best to get that data. After thinking about my intervention reading groups, I realized that the reading records I do with those students on a regular basis in leveled literacy intervention (LLI) have provided me with the best and *most broad* information about my students' reading behaviors such as fluency and comprehension of reading, as well as use of reading strategies. Since these have proved valuable during my intervention time, I decided that this would be the best formative assessment to use with my guided reading groups as well.

For math, I met with our school's math coach and discussed how I could pull information and data from the work my students are already doing during our math task time (centers). Since these activities were directly related to the place value concepts we had been learning in class, specifically within the concept of 10 more and 10 less and representing two digit numbers in multiple ways, I thought that they would be a good indicator of my students' understanding. Collecting this work for my

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entire class and examining it allowed me to sort my students into three groups: students who have mastered the concept, students who are close to mastering the concept and students who are still emerging in their understanding. Not only would this work provide me with a quick glimpse into my students' understanding but it would also allow me to ensure that the center activities I was asking my students to complete were purposeful. Chappuis supports this idea when he states that "when teachers assess student learning for purely formative purposes...the assessment serves as practice for students just like a meaningful homework assignment does," (2007/2008). Using center work as a formative assessment will not only allow me to check my student's understanding of place value, they will also check the meaningfulness of the work/assignments I am asking my students to complete.

I started by learning more about the reading record aligned with the Mondo program my school district has provided us with. I figured since I use this resource often with my guided reading groups, it would make sense for me to use the reading record component as well. After studying the components of the reading record I found that it assesses a student's oral reading fluency and does a comprehension check as well. I decided to start by administering reading records to a small number of my students. I chose to start with a few of my struggling readers (an advanced reader as well). *After administering the reading record I noticed that...* I decided to administer reading records to my struggling readers every two weeks, my on and above grade level students every month. This data would help to confirm and inform my ongoing observations of my students' reading behaviors. I found that it was very difficult to administer reading records consistently in addition to guided reading time. Since the information gained from this assessment was so helpful and instructive, I decided that I would administer reading records during the group's normal guided reading time. I found that taking this time to assess my students allowed me to confirm what behaviors I noticed during guided reading, allowing for immediate teaching opportunities. One such opportunity came following administering a reading record to one of my struggling students. I administered a level G reading record and noticed that my student was struggling with applying word sounding strategies to unfamiliar words. After listening to my student read, I was able to go back to the words he had gotten stopped on and worked with him to review and apply the strategies we had been working on in our group. This inconsistent application of word sounding strategies was something I had also been observing during guided reading lessons. I noticed that on the next reading record I administered, the student self-corrected more errors and applied the strategies I had reviewed following the previous assessment. After administering my first few reading records, my mentor and I sat down to review the data and analyze my student's miscues. I noticed that many of my English Language Learner's miscues were visual, meaning that they made errors with words that "looked right" in the sentence they were reading. I reviewed a few reading strategies that encouraged these students to focus on self-correcting and looking for chunks in the words they encounter.

In math, I decided to use my math tasks to assess my students' understanding of representations of two digit numbers. Over the course of a few weeks, I pulled student work samples from two centers assessing this concept. I found that I was able to separate my students' work into three categories: students who had mastered the concept, students who were very close to mastering the concept and students who were still emerging in their understanding of the concept. Separating students into these three groups helped me to know who was ready to move on and who I needed to

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pull into a small group for reteaching and practice. After analyzing my student's work I found that 8 students had mastered the concept, 6 students were close to mastery, and 6 students were still emerging. I also noticed that all six emerging students were still shaky in their understanding of the value of tens and ones. I found that this formative data helped me to plan my small group math lessons more effectively and target my students' areas of need (the value tens and ones). From there I was able to develop specific activities for these students to practice representing numbers in multiple ways. This data also supported my development of small group math lessons for students close to mastery of the concept. I was able to pinpoint some areas of confusion and used daily support from a math tutor to help these students represent two digit numbers in multiple ways. I chose to use this grouping to assess other student work with other math review concepts as well. Sorting my students' work into focused groups helped me to better plan for my math intervention and enrichment groups.

Throughout this process I learned a lot about formative assessment. Formative assessment is a valuable tool through which I can assess student understanding quickly and easily, allowing for immediate modifications to my instruction. I have learned that it is not a big, formal assessment meant to take a large amount of time, but it is meant to be a quick and simple way to see what my students' challenges and understandings are. I believe that the most valuable tool I've gained from this module is the ability to assess my students easily and modify my instruction based on my records and observations. I have found that in reading, my instruction has become more focused and I have a better idea of when my students are ready to be challenged at the next level. Reading records have also served to confirm or challenge my observations of my students' reading behaviors. A reading record for one student whose struggle with applying word sounding strategies helped confirm observations I had made during guided reading. As a result, I reviewed these strategies and introduced others for this student and other students struggling with similar challenges. Taking the time to go through each reading record and analyze my student's miscues also helped inform my instruction and allowed me to pinpoint areas of struggle for each of my readers. Knowing whether the error was a word that made sense (M), sounded right (S), or looked right (L) to my reader assisted me in planning lessons review or teach strategies to prevent these types of errors. During this module, I also learned that reading records do not need to be given at a different time of the day, they can be administered during my guided reading block. Using them as a quick tool during the time I have allotted for group allows me to pinpoint my student's understandings and challenges and immediately adjust my instruction to meet their needs.

I have learned the most about simple formative assessments in math. While I chose to use my math center activities to use as a quick check of my student's understandings, I quickly realized that this assessment would be very valuable in informing my small group instruction. It was very simple to pick a focus for a few weeks and pull student work specifically for that strand of the Common Core State Standards. I also found that this method of formative assessment made it easy for me to quickly check my student's knowledge of review math concepts in addition, subtraction, and graphing. Sorting my student's work into three groups (mastery, progressing towards mastery, and emerging) made it easy for me to develop a plan of action for a tutor in my room to use to help inform instruction for struggling learners, as well as my own intervention group. Not only did this module help me to collect valuable information about my students, it also allowed me to assess how purposeful my centers were. If all the

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students in my class had fallen into the emerging category, I would not only reflect on my direct instruction, but also about the task I was asking them to complete. Was the clarity of the task accessible for my students or was there something I needed to change about the work I was asking them to complete? This coming fall, I plan to continue to use my student's center work and reading records to monitor their understanding on a more consistent basis. I plan to develop a flexible schedule for formative assessment in both reading and math so that I can regularly use this tool to inform my lessons on at least a monthly basis.